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ABSTRACT

At the request of students and the Board of Trustees, the Connecticut Community Colleges began a system to develop a common course number system. The reasons for creating a common course number system include: (1) it simplifies comparisons between colleges in the system; (2) it facilitates course comparisons, easing the transcript evaluation process for students transferring among colleges in the system; and (3) it facilitates the negotiation and implementation of articulation agreements among community colleges, the Connecticut State University system, the University of Connecticut, and private institutions. Guidelines for the renumbering process include: (1) the common number system should include as many courses as possible; (2) as discipline experts, faculty members should make the judgments as to the comparability of course content; (3) courses that have 80% consonance of content should carry the same designator, number, and title; (4) the same three-letter designator will identify courses in a discipline wide system; (5) all courses in the system have new designators, and in some cases new numbers and titles; and (6) each course, in addition to a three-letter designator, also has a three-digit number. These numbers have significance, including level and area of study. (NB)

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ED 457 885

CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

COMMON COURSE NUMBERS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Several years ago the Connecticut Community Colleges began a project to develop a common course number system. A massive project, progress has been slow and the project was reorganized and expanded in the summer of 1999, and has involved hundreds of professional staff members: faculty, directors, deans, and System Office staff. The impetus for this project came from students and the Board of Trustees, and it will primarily benefit students.

A number of reasons make a common course number system sensible.

- It makes comparisons easier between colleges in the system.

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- It facilitates course comparisons, facilitating the transcript evaluation process for students transferring among our colleges or from our colleges to baccalaureate institutions.
- It also facilitates the negotiation and implementation of articulation agreements between the community colleges, the Connecticut State University system, and the University of Connecticut, and private institutions.

2. GUIDELINES

With project reorganization and expansion came a set of guidelines for staff. As the project progressed, these guidelines have been modified and expanded as necessary.

- The common number system should incorporate as many courses as possible. By comparing existing similar courses, and by making an effort to realign content and catalog descriptions, faculty have reduced unnecessary differences.
- As discipline experts, faculty members must be the individuals to make the judgments as to the comparability of course content, and to develop ways to bring the bulk of the content into consonance.
- Courses that have 80% consonance of content should carry the same designator, number, and title.
- The same three-letter designator will identify all courses in a discipline system-wide. An asterisk (*) in the fourth position will distinguish the new courses from those in the existing course inventories. For example, English = ENG*, physics = PHY*, Business Office Technology = BOT*, etc.
- All courses in the system have new designators, and in some cases new numbers and titles. The lists of courses below include all courses offered by any college in the system.
- Each course, in addition to a three-letter-plus-asterisk designator, also has a three-digit number. The numbers have meaning, as follows:
    - First digit indicates the level:
        - 0xx - a course carrying no degree credit
        - 1xx - a course usually taken as part of the first year of study, or which is a prerequisite for other, more advanced, or more professional courses
        - 2xx - a course usually taken as part of the second year of study, or which has prerequisites, or is taken by students matriculated in a certificate or degree program of which this course forms a professional requirement.
    - Second digit, within many of the disciplines, designates an area of study or interest. Where a faculty committee developed a system, it is included below.
    - Third digit is sequential, and usually carries no meaning.

- Since total agreement by everyone on everything remains an elusive goal, and since there is no obvious solution to every issue, the committees endeavored to develop a sensible, workable, and inclusive system that would meet the needs of the project. Such a system inevitably includes compromises regarding titles, numbers, and sequencing.

- Upon adoption of common numbers and titles, all courses recognized as common will, with the effective date of the project's implementation, take the new/common designator, number, and title. The current/former designators/numbers/titles will disappear, although the Banner system retains them for historical purposes, transcript entries, etc.

3. MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMON COURSE NUMBER SYSTEM

SECTION I. AUTHORIZATION AND OVERVIEW

a. Authorization. On October 16, 2000, the Board of Trustees authorized the implementation of a common course number system for Connecticut's community colleges. The Board's resolution further authorized the Chancellor or Chancellor's Designee to take such actions as may be required to this end, and to establish such policies, procedures, and instruments as may be required to maintain the new system. This authorization includes, but is not limited to, assigning and coordinating numbers and titles for new courses and programs, promoting the further development of common course numbers, and resolving discrepancies.

b. **Overview**. Moving from the current situation, with each college determining its own course numbers and titles, to the common course number system requires careful monitoring and managing to ensure that the process is as smooth as possible. During the transition period, there must be clear "stop" dates for the courses and titles being replaced, and "start" dates for the new/common course designations. There must also be a procedure for resolving discrepancies, and for handling new courses that may be developed at the colleges. Once the new/common system is fully implemented, there must be a set of procedures in place that will maintain it, and prevent the development of separate, unaffiliated course numbers and titles. This paper is in two sections, the first describing the transition to the new system, and the second describing the operation of the new system, once the transition is complete.

SECTION II. TRANSITION TO THE COMMON COURSE NUMBER SYSTEM

1. Responsibility for managing the transition rests with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The daily operation of the transition is delegated to the Associate Academic Officer (AAO).

2. The common course number discipline/area committees submit their final reports to the AAO, who puts them into final format and sends them to the colleges through the academic deans. This final format includes the new/common course numbers and titles, and the numbers and titles of all of the courses that are being replaced, by college. It also includes any unique courses.

3. The academic deans send the reports to the appropriate faculty members at their colleges. It is likely that one or more of the faculty members will have served on the common course number committees – the contents of the reports should therefore be familiar to them, and the process move quickly. In some cases, the contents of the reports will be new to the faculty reviewing them. In any case, the review must include identifying any courses that may have been overlooked by the

committees and suggesting where they should be included, as well as further identifying any disconnects or problems.

4. The academic deans, at their regular monthly meetings, review the reports and consider any comments reported from the colleges or faculty members. If there are no problems, then the deans approve the lists. If there are problems, the deans attempt to resolve them, or pass them to the AAO for further work. The AAO will work with the colleges involved, and with the members of the committees, to develop a solution. The revised lists will be sent to the colleges for review and comment. If there are substantial changes, a final review will be conducted.

5. The final approved lists are sent by the AAO to the CAO for review and approval. If the CAO identifies a problem with a list, it is returned to the AAO for further work and resolution of the problem. If there is no problem, the CAO approves the list and authorizes its implementation and use.

6. The Academic Department, working with the Banner Team, enters the new lists and data into the Banner system, developing a single script applicable to all colleges and reducing the workload at the colleges. A notice showing the effective date for the new courses will be sent to all academic deans, who will disseminate it at their colleges, as appropriate. If problems are identified, the AAO works with the Banner Team, or the colleges, to resolve them. The information is also posted on the system website, and becomes available for viewing by all faculty and staff.

7. The new numbers and titles may not be used by any college before the official start date named by the CAO in the transmittal notice.

8. During the transition period, colleges developing new courses must be aware of and sensitive to the transition process. The academic deans, or their representatives developing the courses, are responsible for coordinating with the AAO regarding the proper number and title to be used. Since not all disciplines will implement the new numbers/titles at the same time, it is critical that the process be carefully monitored; new numbers cannot be used prematurely, and old ones cannot be used after the start date for the new ones. The AAO is responsible for ensuring that the numbers and titles selected for use are compatible with either the current or new systems, as may be appropriate.

SECTION III. MANAGING THE COMMON COURSE NUMBER SYSTEM

1. Responsibility. The CAO is responsible for maintaining the common course number system. This includes the master inventory of courses, which will be placed on the system web site, approving the numbers and titles for new courses, and any necessary and associated actions required to maintain the system. The daily operation of all or part of the system may be delegated to the AAO.

2. Procedure. When new courses are developed for use at the colleges, it is imperative to maintain the integrity of the system. The following procedure will be used for instituting new courses:

a. Faculty members/colleges develop a new course. They are responsible for all of the usual work as to format, content, etc., required by the college's course approval process. They are also responsible for consulting the master inventory of courses to determine whether the course they propose is offered already by another college in the system.

b. If it is obvious, from consulting the list, that a course that is 80% or more congruent with the proposed course exists, then the college should adopt the common designator, number, and title.

c. If there is some question as to whether the proposed course meets the 80% content rule, the faculty proposing the course should contact their colleagues at the other college or colleges offering the course to determine whether the course they are proposing does, in fact, meet the 80% rule. If it does, then the faculty should so advise the academic dean, who will then approve the adoption of the common designator, number, and title. If it does not meet the 80% rule, then the faculty should so advise the academic dean, who will contact the AAO to obtain an appropriate designator, number, and title.

d. The AAO will recommend to the CAO a designator, number, and title for the new course, and is responsible for ensuring that the designator, number, and title selected are compatible with the system adopted by the appropriate common course number committee. The CAO may approve the recommendation, or decide on another.

e. This decision is communicated to the college, and the appropriate addition is made to the master inventory so that it is available for use by other colleges. It is simultaneously sent to the Banner Team for entry into the Banner system. The decision document will include a start date for the new course.

4. THE NEW INVENTORY: LISTS OF COURSES

a. General. These lists are presented by broad discipline. Most are narrow in scope, and their title pretty well describes their content: history, pharmacy technology, recreation, e. g. Others cover several areas: physical sciences (astronomy, chemistry, physics, et al.), criminal justice (criminology, security, law enforcement, et al.). They are really "conversion" lists, with each being set up to show the new or common course designators, numbers, and titles, and underneath each, the designator, number, and title of the courses replaced, by college. The lists show both the common and the unique courses, so that all courses offered by all colleges are included. Some committees

also developed a system to give meaning to the center digits, to help in categorizing or grouping courses. When this has been done, it is presented first, so that readers know the numbering scheme.

b. How to read the lists. Using the History course list as an example, it will be seen that in addition to developing a "conversion" list of courses, the committee also agreed on a numbering framework. This is presented at the start of the list, and looks like this:

100s	Survey courses
201-202	U. S. history survey courses
210-229	Advanced U. S. history courses
230-249	Advanced European history courses
250-259	New approaches
260-269	Advanced Latin American history courses
270-279	Advanced Asian history courses
280-289	Advanced Africa and Middle Eastern history courses

What this means is that courses have been grouped by topic and numbered accordingly. The framework tells where they can be found, and is also a guide as to where to place new courses that will be developed in the future.

The list of courses follows. Here is a typical entry, taken from that list.

HIS* 233 - TWENTIETH CENTURY RUSSIA
GA - HIS 205 - Twentieth Century Russia
NW - Hist. 224 - Soviet Union in the Twentieth Century
NK - HI 106 - Russia and the World Today
TR - HIS 217 - Soviet Russian History in the Twentieth Century

What this means is that the History Common Course Number Committee has determined that the four courses shown here offered by Gateway, Northwestern Connecticut, Norwalk, and Three Rivers Community Colleges respectively, carrying the different designators, numbers, and titles shown, are at least 80% consonant in content. They will, therefore, all be converted to the new common designation, HIS* 233 - TWENTIETH CENTURY RUSSIA. This means that the course designators, numbers, and titles shown for the four colleges will disappear, and all will use the new designation. There will no longer be a "Russia and the World Today" course at Norwalk, but instead there will be a "Twentieth Century Russia" course, as there will be at the other three colleges. The same is true for the current courses at the other colleges.

And later, the list shows:

HIS* 248 - GERMANY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
TR - HIS 220 - Germany in the Twentieth Century

This means that only one college, Three Rivers, offers this course. However, in order to keep all course designations consistent within an area or discipline, the designator changes from HIS to HIS*. The title remains the same. The number has been changed because the committee developed

a numbering scheme for categorizing courses, and the number had to change to fit that pattern: advanced courses in European history will carry numbers between 230-249.

All lists are set up in the same manner.

c. Connection to BANNER. Although the lists are set up by area or discipline, BANNER entries will be alphabetically by course designator. If one is looking for courses in English, they will be found in the English list below, and under the ENG* designator in BANNER. If one is looking for courses in Physics, however, they will be found in the Physical Sciences list below, but under the PHY* designator in BANNER. The lists are by area or discipline, which do not always coincide with individual course groupings, as was noted in paragraph 4a above.

d. List of areas/disciplines. Following are the lists of course areas/disciplines as currently developed. Minor changes or regroupings may be made before the project is completed. Those marked with an asterisk * are available for viewing now.

*** Accounting**
*** Anthropology**
*** Architecture**
*** Art**
*** Automotive**
*** Aviation Science**
*** Biological/Biomedical**
*** Biology**
Business
*** Business Office Technology**
*** Chemical Technology**
Civil Engineering Technology
*** Computers**
*** Construction Technology**
*** Criminal Justice**
*** Dance**
Deaf Studies
*** Dental Assisting/Dental Hygiene**
*** Diagnostic Medical Sonography**
*** Dietetic Technician/Technology**
*** Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Counselor**
*** Early Childhood Education**
*** Economics**
*** Electrical Apprentice**
Electrical Engineering Technology
*** EMT/Paramedic**
Engineering
*** English**
*** ESL**
*** Environmental Engineering/Water Management**

*** Fire Technology and Administration**
*** Foreign Languages**
*** Geography**
*** Graphic Communication Technology**
*** Graphic Design**
Health
*** Health Information Management**
*** History**
*** Hospitality Management**
*** Human Services**
*** Humanities**
*** Interpreter Preparation**
*** Labor Studies**
*** Landscaping and Horticulture**
*** Legal Assistant/Paralegal**
*** Library Assistant/Library Technology**
***Maintenance**
Manufacturing Engineering Technology/Industrial Management
*** Mathematics**
*** Media and Communication**
*** Medical Assistant**
*** Multimedia Technology**
*** Music**
*** Nuclear Engineering Technology**
*** Nuclear Medicine Technology**
*** Nursing**
*** Occupational Therapy Assistant**
*** Ophthalmic Design and Dispensing**
*** Pharmacy Technology**
*** Philosophy**
*** Photonics**
*** Physical Education**
*** Physical Sciences**
*** Physical Therapist Assistant**
*** Plastics Technology**
*** Political Science**
*** Postal Service Management**
*** Psychology**
*** Radiation Therapy**
*** Radiography**
*** Recreation**
*** Respiratory Care**
*** Sociology**
Speech
*** Surgical Technology**
Theatre

* Toxicology
* Veterinary Technology